

Ellie impulsively went to Medford to see the Halliells, but returned here with the hope of the return of your work. Love to the dear ones.

Roxbury, Jan. 8, 1878.

My Dear Fanny:

Yours is the only letter received to-day. It seems your time has been pretty busily occupied since I left you on Saturday. The number of callers upon you is likely to be increased - at least, in proportion to the acquaintances made and visits reciprocated - perhaps in the end too many for enjoyment. I am glad you and Harry were able to take tea with Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons. You mention that, in the course of conversation, Mr. G. got "quite rabid" upon the subject of protection. I do not know from this whether he is for a tariff or for free trade, as you do not state with whom he was arguing; but I should be disposed to rank him with the free traders until I knew to the contrary. Whatever views he has on any subject, he holds them tenaciously, and expresses them emphatically.

Helen, it seems, spent the Sunday at Orange, and with benefit to her cough. It was some drawback from the pleasure of being with her that she coughed so much, looked so thin, and had so poor an appetite. I long to see her robust, as you were at her age; but her very nervous temperament is quite different from yours, and it is probable that she will always be delicate and thin. Of course, I need not say how much I love her, as well as dear little Harold and Oswald.

The day being bright and mild, my ride from New York to Boston was a pleasant one; though it seemed like being transported to another country on seeing snow and ice in all directions all through Connecticut to the end of my journey. For some cause we had a detention on the way, which made us ten or fifteen minutes late when we got to Worcester; but we were only one hour in running the remaining forty-four miles, and so arrived in the city on time. Frank was at

the depot, with a carriage, to welcome me; and in thirty minutes we were at Rockledge. William soon came in, but reported Ellie as too unwell to come with him. Georgina had a nice supper ready, and many questions were asked and answered all round. Everything about the house was in perfect order. Mrs. Osborne and her friend Miss Soule arrived at Linwood Street on Saturday, and will remain for some time.

Sunday there was a marked change in the weather, being sharply cold but brilliant. In the afternoon I went with Frank, William and Miss Soule to hear the opening lecture of the Free Religious course, at Horticultural Hall, by C. B. Frothingham, on the most conspicuous antagonists of Christianity, beginning with Celsus in the second century, and ending with Francis E. Abbott in our own day. It was a scholarly production, and listened to with marked interest and satisfaction by a solid body of "heretics." I was obliged to dis-

sent from its main conclusion, as making no discrimination between Christianity as taught and exemplified by Jesus and his Apostles, and the atrocious perversions of it from the days of Constantine till now. After the lecture I spoke to Mr. Frothingham, and he expressed his great regret that he was too unwell to be with your party on the evening of the 3d inst. I told him I left with you the volume of Gerrit Smith's Life, and that you would see it safely returned.

I have not been out of the house since Sunday, on account of the severity of the weather. Yesterday morning the mercury was only 6 above zero, and did not rise during the day above 15. This morning it was 2 below, and now stands at 18 above. In Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont the mercury ranges from 10 to 42 below zero. The ice crop is safe.

By the enclosed slip you will see that the Riverside Press Establishment came near being totally destroyed by fire ^{last evening}. Had the wind been in the opposite direction, the loss would have been great. Happily, none of the employees were hurt.

Your loving Father.